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## ***DEATH PENALTY SOUGHT IN BOY'S ADDUCTION, SLAYING (/MEDIA/2015/8/22/DEATH-PENALTY-SOUGHT- IN-BOYS-ADDUCTION-SLAYING)***

More than 20 years ago, two armed men in ski masks forced their way into a south Houston apartment around midnight as the family inside slept.

Angelo Garcia, Jr., an energetic 6-year-old often seen riding his bike around the neighborhood, woke up to cries and shouting.

His stepfather was being pistol-whipped. His mother was being sexually assaulted.

The attackers tied up the couple, ransacked the apartment and fled with a wallet and jewelry. They also took Angelo.

It was September 30, 1992.

Two decades later, a saga in which forensic science may have caught up with a suspect before authorities did will culminate Monday as the capital murder trial of Obel Cruz-Garcia opens.

The 45-year-old is facing the death penalty, accused of kidnapping and killing Angelo.

"He denies it, he denies everything," said his attorney, Skip Cornelius. "He has consistently denied any involvement."

Cornelius said little else about strategy, including how to defuse DNA tests that appear to link Cruz-Garcia to the crime.

In 1992, police believed the assaults and abduction were part of a drug deal gone bad, which the family denied.

Friends and neighbors helped investigators search for the boy for six weeks. His remains were found by a man crabbing on the south shore of Goose Creek Lake in Baytown. He was identified through dental records and the torn Batman shorts he had been wearing when he was kidnapped.

Even before the body was found, police wanted to talk to 25-year Obel Cruz-Garcia but believed he had fled the country.

The case gathered dust as advances in DNA identification changed criminal investigations.

In 2007, a DNA profile was created from evidence left by one of the assailants. Armed with a way to implicate at least one of the attackers, Houston investigators enlisted the help of the FBI who found Cruz-Garcia in a prison in Puerto Rico.

When the DNA matched, Cruz-Garcia was returned to Houston to face charges. He remains in the Harris County jail without bail.

Prosecutors Natalie Tise and Justin Wood said little about strategy or the evidence the jury is expected to hear, which could include testimony from a co-defendant, according to court records.

Tise did say the victim's family is expected to testify.

"They've been very involved, very supportive," Tise said. "I've been working on this case for years now and it is a horrible, horrible tragic case."

The trial, in state District Judge Renee Magee's court, is expected to last about two weeks.

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